24. Agricultural development with special reference to irrigation works in Central Travancore.

MR. K. J. ABRAHAM (*Member, Municipal Council, Tiruvalla*) said that Travancore was producing some of her own food materials like rice, tapioca, banana etc. But the rice produced was not sufficient to meet the needs of the country. A large portion of the rice required for consumption here was being imported from outside. It was obvious that that country alone was economically prosperous which imported less and less of its necessaries every year. In so far as Travancore was concerned the reverse was the case.

When one considered the problem of agricultural improvement in Travancore, the first thing that struck him was the abundance of fresh water in the country. In the supply of fresh water, no other country was perhaps so fortunate as Travancore. Arrangements could be easily made for storing this water and using it for irrigation. The irrigation projects established by Government in South Travancore did credit to them. But no such works were undertaken in Central Travancore though irrigation was absolutely necessary for the *viruppu* crops and for sugarcane, tapioca and cocoanut cultivated in these regions. An Irrigation Engineer should be immediately appointed to prepare an irrigation scheme for Central Travancore. A committee should also be appointed consisting of an irrigation Executive Engineer, a Dewan Peishkar, a Deputy Conservator, the Director of Agriculture, an expert legal adviser and three or four agriculturists to ascertain the extent of cultivated land in the State, the extent of uncultivated land, the nature of the crops that could be raised on the areas left uncultivated, and the means of extending the area under cultivation. If this could not be done, Government should at least require the Economic Development Board to undertake the enquiry.

Agricultural boards should be established in each taluk or village. These should have in their composition officers of Government as well as agriculturists and merchants or manufacturers of standing. These boards should endeavour to introduce as far as possible into the country the means for the development of agriculture adopted by other countries and also the measures recommended for the improvement of agriculture by the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

The purely literary form of education which was being imparted in the country was fit only to increase the number of the educated unemployed. This kind of education should go by the board. It should be replaced by another calculated to secure the economic and material prosperity of the country. With a view to achieving this end, agricultural farms and model factories should be opened as adjuncts to each school.

The P. W. D. Workshops should be reconstituted and an expert artisan should be appointed there, under whose instructions improved implements for agricultural operations should be manufactured and their use popularised.

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DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Abraham, let me assure you that Government realise to the fullest the importance of agriculture and also the unwisdom of its divorcement from irrigation, particularly, that form of irrigation which passed under the name of minor irrigation. At the present moment, there are before the Government certain proposals for the creation of an agency to deal with the question of minor irrigation in its bearings on agriculture and with the due association on it of officers of the Agricultural Department. These proposals are now under examination.

25. Suggestions for the development of agriculture with special reference to Pattanamtitta.

MR. NAGOOR MEERA MEERANAN MEERA ROWTHER (*Member, Nominated*) said that under ideal conditions each country should be able to produce its own necessaries. This was a difficult thing to achieve, but the ideal deserved to be kept in view by every country. So far as Travancore was concerned, she was depending for all her necessaries upon other countries. Even her staple food *viz.*, rice was being imported from foreign lands. It was highly necessary that this system should cease. Travancore should grow all the rice required for her own consumption. The following remedies might be tried for this purpose:—

(i) Swampy areas within all reserve forests should be thrown open to cultivation and assigned to cultivators on suitable conditions.

(ii) The boundaries of the Kumaranperur, Thekkummala and Vadakkummala reserves in the Pattanamtitta taluk should be altered and the portions of these reserves adjoining inhabited areas should be registered and given to the poor ryots in the locality. If this were not feasible, these lands should be given at least on *pattom* or *varam* to these poor ryots.

(iii) All available portions of the Kumaranperur, Thekkummala and Vadakkummala reserves in the Pattanamtitta taluk should be disafforested and assigned in small blocks not exceeding ten acres each to the Muslim inhabitants of the locality who had sustained very heavy losses in connection with the paddy cultivations which they undertook under the *taungya* system in the years 1100, 1101, and 1102.

(iv) The lands which were recently amalgamated with the Kumaranperur, Thekkummala and Vadakkummala reserves and which were till then in the occupation of the Muslim inhabitants of Pattanamtitta should be registered, in cases where they were already surveyed, in the names of those at whose instance the survey was done, and in cases where they were not surveyed, in the names of other persons either on *pattom* or *varam* for cultivation of paddy.

DEWAN'S REPLY: According to your request, I will go over there and inspect the places and then pass orders on the subject.

The Assembly adjourned at 4-50 P. M. to meet again the next day.

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